AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-2 (Canceled)

3. (previously presented) A process for the preparation of phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid di-sodium salt substantially free of discoloration causing by-products comprising:

(a) reacting o-phenylene-diamine with terephthalic acid and chlorosulfonic acid in the presence of strong acids, wherein the reaction time is 10 to 15 hours,

(b) dissolving the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid obtained in step (a) in water and treating the solution with activated carbon, which activated carbon is then separated off, followed by precipitating out phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt by adding sodium chloride and separating off the water, and

(c) dissolving the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodiium salt precipitate of step (b) in water and sodium hydroxide solution, followed by treating the

resulting solution with activated carbon, which activated carbon is then separated off,

(d) acidifying the solution obtained in step (c) to precipitate out phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt substantially free of by-products which would cause discoloration of phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt, and

(e) optionally further purifying the product of step (d).

4. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process according to Claim 3, wherein the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid obtained in the reaction is dissolved in the first step in water in the temperature range from 40 to 80°C.

Claim 5 (canceled)

6. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process according to Claim 3, wherein the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt obtained in the first step is dissolved in the second step in water in the temperature range from 30 to 80°C.

7. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process according to Claim 3, wherein the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt obtained in the first step

is dissolved in the second step in water and, after treatment with and removal of the activated carbon, is precipitated out by acidification to about pH 3.

8. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process according to Claim 3, wherein the acidification in the second step is carried out with hydrochloric acid.

9. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process according to Claim 3, wherein the phenylene-bis-benzimidazole-tetrasulfonic acid disodium salt obtained in the second step is washed with phosphoric acid.

10. (currently amended) ~~A process~~ The process as in claim 3, wherein step (a) is carried out at a temperature of from 110°C to 120°C.